

TOWN OF DEERFIELD
Parks & Recreation Commission
October 8, 2013
MINUTES

Call to Order

6:00pm: Chairman, Jeff Shute called the meeting to order.

Present: Jeff Shute, Chairman; Julie DeCosta, Amy Harrington, Ken Heckman, Ernie Robert and Melissa Robertson Members

Also Present: Joe Manzi, Parks & Recreation Director

Review of September Minutes

Motion: E. Robert moves to approve the September 2013 Minutes as written

Second: K. Heckman

All in Favor – Motion Carries

Citizens Comments None

Old Home Day – Citizens Comments

J. Manzi informed the Commission that only two surveys have been submitted, but both were positive. The only suggested change was to consider bringing the road and/or bike race back. The survey was in the FORUM, J. DeCosta suggested it be included with a link in the communicator. J. Manzi will work on that and added that people can be directed to the survey year round in preparation for the next Old Home Day event.

Deerfield Baseball & Softball Updates

J. Manzi informed the Commission that Ed will be resigning from the Youth Sports Coordinator position.

There are a few items/issues that need to be addressed regarding the Hartford Brook and Bicentennial playing fields. J. Manzi would like to address the final part of the drainage project at Bicentennial, there is also now a large sink hole at the 3rd base dugout of the softball side that needs to be fixed and the building at Bicentennial is beginning to sag. In speaking with the Town Administrator he will be coordinating a site walk with the Selectmen to review Bicentennial and the GBW Building Playground Area in preparation for Budget talks. He asked that the Commission come to a consensus on the go forward plan for both Hartford Brook and Bicentennial fields. The Baseball and Softball programs lost money this year due to staffing expenses, as well as purchases of new bleachers and a batting cage. Chairman Shute asked if they could see a breakdown of the cost between program staffing and maintenance staffing, J. Manzi will provide. Chairman Shute added that he thinks it would be impactful for parents to see a pie chart developed that shows the expense breakdown of their registration fees. J. Manzi indicated that this year the programs are running (5,600), contributors to that deficit are Baseball Dues of \$1,600, Bleachers and Bases purchased for \$2,500, and staffing. K. Heckman expressed that the quickest way to reduce the costs would be through reduced labor hours, which can be done with volunteers.

Regarding Hartford Brook improvements M. Robertson asked if the cost would need to be covered through the Revolving Fund, or might there be another approach, for example through a Warrant Article or another area of the Town Budget? The Commission agreed that the likelihood of a Warrant Article passing would be slim. E. Robert asked what the current use of the Hartford Brook field was, adding that he does not have a good feel for what resources are available and what the cost of the Bicentennial improvements would be. J. Manzi answered that currently Hartford Brook is host to fall soccer games and practices, and early pre-season baseball and softball practices, mainly because Bicentennial is wet early in the season. Regarding the costs at Bicentennial, J. Manzi hoped to know more after the site walk with the Selectmen to look at erosion issues. He hopes to circle Alex into the conversation so that a coordination of resources between departments could reduce expenses. Overall the fields are OK. Chairman Shute added that the parking lot at Bicentennial is another area needing attention. K. Heckman feels it is important to protect the Hartford Brook investment and wondered if the attrition of players at higher levels is a natural progression, or could it be due to the facilities?

The Commission agreed that the first step for Hartford Brook should be to get electricity and power to the field. J. Manzi will get clarification from the Select Board as to whether the work will need to go through the formal bid process, or whether it can be spent from the revolving fund at the direction of the Commission. M. Robertson spoke that it will be important to outline a five year plan for all facilities to the Board of Selectman and to assign estimated costs to those items. J. Manzi and J. Shute will put together a formal punch list for the 10/21 meeting with the Select Board. Initial items discussed included Hartford Brook Electric/Water and Bicentennial Drainage (2013), Paving Bicentennial Parking Lot (2014), Backstop at Hartford Brook (2015), New Mower (2016), Cargo Van (2017) and Passenger Van (2018). K. Heckman added that it will be important to keep up proactive communication with the Hartford Brook residents regarding the Commission's plans for the field usage.

In closing J. Manzi added that he would like to see formal Boards pulled together for the Baseball and Softball programs, with one function of that Board being the coordination of volunteer duties. The Commission agreed and suggested it would do well to increase visibility and communication if a member of the Commission served on those Boards.

Tailgate Trick or Treat

M. Robertson and J. Manzi did a site walk at the Fairgrounds in preparation for the Tailgate Trick or Treat event on October 27th, one of the items addressed was to institute a “first in, first out” arrangement for attendees. The Rescue Squad has expressed an interest in doing a trailer in 2014, the Commission hopes to see this even grow over the years, especially with the new venue. E. Robert added that as it grows they may also consider other seasonal programming, a Pumpkin Chunkin or Zombie Run were mentioned.

Budget

J. Manzi pointed out the larger net negative Parks & Recreation Budget items from the year, Old Home Day (\$2,000), Gazebo Field (\$2,100), Youth Baseball/Softball (\$5,600), Youth Tennis Camp (\$3,600). He pointed out that the Special Events line with (\$7,000) is misleading as that includes all event staffing costs, but as of September 30, 2013 the Department is (\$6,000). He added that if you take out the FICA/Medi costs of \$9,500 assigned to the Revolving Fund in 2013 that the line is just about even. Chairman Shute asked if the figures included the scholarship to which J. Manzi answered no, the scholarship monies are kept completely separate. J. Manzi will present the major items previously discussed to the Board of Selectmen, pointing out that there is a potential for the revolving fund to be very much in the hole with some of the larger expenditures. Chairman Shute added that they will want to clarify if a Warrant Article is turned down, does that prohibit spending from the revolving fund on the Hartford Brook field items.

Other Programs

J. DeCosta has the Coffeehouse contract which outlines responsibilities of the volunteers. She will be using an online sign up program to coordinate volunteer needs, including Friday set up, Saturday early arrival, baked good donations, and ticket sales. She added that there may be a need for a sound technician at the event. She anticipates the event will clear between \$1,500 and \$2,000 for the Joe Stone Scholarship fund, she asked members of the Commission to post signs outside of Town and suggested they might also do a 50/50 raffle or a donation can at the event to raise additional money.

Other Items

Regarding the proposed Conduct Policy Statements M. Robertson spoke that she likes the purpose of the agreements, but felt that the sample language was very negative and almost scary, specifically how it listed unacceptable physical behavior, i.e. “biting”, “pushing” and “kicking”. She presented alternative language that she drafted. K. Heckman liked M. Robertson’s draft, but pointed out that it did not address the kid’s behavior. E. Robert spoke that the goal was to establish a clear line in the sand, and to find a balance of tone between supporting positive culture and specificity of what will not be tolerated. A. Harrington suggested the unacceptable behavior be generalized to “Intentional bodily harm”, rather than listing out physical actions. J. Manzi indicated the primary issue is to address sportsmanship. Beginning with this year’s Basketball season he plans to hold a pre-season meeting with all interested coaches and parents to discuss the program philosophy. This meeting will be completely separate from the team selection and from there the Department will identify people who are on board and of the right frame of mind to coach the children. He expects Registration forms to go out this week and will plan to host that meeting in the first weeks of November. He will include information on the Philosophy Meeting on the Registration forms as well as RSA information for volunteers. The commission plans to finalize the Code of Conduct language at the November meeting when member J. Hutchinson will be present.

J. Manzi provided an update on the After School Program. The Department is interviewing a Para Professional/Program Coordinator and is optimistic of what that person could bring to the program. There are two kids in the program that require one on one attention, this has gone well so far, but there is a need for better training of the staff. J. Manzi is looking into a training course for de-escalation techniques, once certified he will be able to offer the training to others. The hope is to increase the training/certification of the After School Program Staff to make them better prepared from a legal perspective.

Adjournment

Motion – K. Heckman moves to adjourn the meeting of October 8, 2013

Second – E. Robert

All in Favor - Motion Carries

Meeting Adjourns at 7:45pm

Next Meeting Tuesday, November 12th @ 6:00pm

*The Minutes were Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katherine A. Libby, Recording Secretary.
Pending Approval by the Parks & Recreation Commission*